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SUBJECT: MONITORING REPORT FOR G/TIP FY06 PROGRAM: WORLD VISION'S "VOICES OF VICTIMS"

REFS: A. 07 STATE 146066
[1B.](#) 08 VIENTIANE 000145

¶1. SUMMARY: In response to G/TIP's request (ref A) post conducted a review of the G/TIP-funded World Vision "Voices of Victims: Youth-to-Youth Advisory System on Safe Migration" grant project. The project period is currently September 2007 to September 2009, though the project draws on FY06 funds. While the grantee conducted an introductory workshop and hired project staff, lengthy memorandum of understanding negotiations between World Vision and the provincial authorities and central government of Laos (GOL) have delayed full program implementation. World Vision expects the MOU to be approved in late August and the project to begin in September.
END SUMMARY.

¶2. Following are responses to Reftel inquiries.

¶A. An Embassy staff member met with John Whan Yoon, Mekong Delta Regional Trafficking Strategy II (MDRTS II) Regional Manager, and Leigh Vickery, Advocacy and Anti-Trafficking Support Consultant, in Vientiane to discuss the status of World Vision's "Voices of Victims" (VoV) project, a youth-to-youth advisory system on safe migration, funded by G/TIP. The project period is September 2007 to September 2009 and the project is based in Savannakhet Province in southern Laos.

¶B. World Vision hired project staff and conducted trainings and informal meetings to begin setting up the trafficking awareness program, though further activities toward full implementation will need to wait for the completed MOU (see para 4). World Vision held a four-day introductory workshop for the Voices of Victims (VoV) project in Savannakhet in February 2008 to build trust among the stakeholders, orient the government to the project, and train World Vision staff. VoV is now fully staffed with a Program Manager and three project officers, all based in Savannakhet. World Vision held informal meetings and set up Project Coordination Committees to explain and build understanding of the project in the province. The committees are comprised of World Vision staff and local government contacts. World Vision identified five villages in three districts in which to implement the VoV project. The villages were chosen based on need, donor coordination, government permission, and Area Development Plan (ADP) assessments. (Note: ADPs are long-term, multi-sector, integrated development plans operating at the village level -- essentially World Vision's keystone projects.) Two project staff have attended a related anti-trafficking workshop in Bangkok on the Mekong Delta Regional Trafficking Strategy II (MDRTS II) program and also received gender training, which included gender analysis and program design and implementation.

¶C. The grantee encountered lengthy delays in the MOU approval process with the provincial government. The GOL does not permit foreign organizations to begin project implementation until the signing of an MOU is complete, and thus the grantee did not progress towards specific objectives and indicators in the proposal. The grantee submitted the MOU and project proposal in March and did not receive feedback until July. The main issue under discussion was the location and scope of the Migrant Advice Center. If the revised

MOU is approved in August, World Vision will begin the project in September.

¶D. The grantee is operating in the context of an authoritarian system in which obtaining government permission is a cumbersome and time-consuming process. However, World Vision, which has operated in Laos longer than any other international NGO, is well-versed in GOL project approval procedures. The organization is, in the Embassy's view, well-positioned to effect long-term change and development of local capacity. (Comment: While the timeframe is uncertain, there is little doubt that the GOL will eventually approve the MOU.)

¶E. World Vision's strong record in Laos indicates the organization is qualified to implement the VoV program. Because the project has not yet begun, reporting on the grantee's capacity will be undertaken at a later date.

¶F. The grantee believes the project period of two years is too short to implement sustainable programming, particularly given the burdensome operating context. The grantee suggests G/TIP consider longer-term RFAs. In the Embassy's estimation, the VoV project is likely to require a time extension due to the delays in the MOU process.

¶G. This project is well-positioned to address key deficiencies set forth in the Laos TIP country narrative, such as the lack of local capacity and the problem of internal migration. VoV strives to build local capacity through its community-based protection mechanisms and integrated programming with ADPs, and the safe migration educational initiatives are applicable to both internal and cross-border trafficking. Comments on the effectiveness of program operations will be undertaken at a later date.

¶H. Despite being hamstrung by the lengthy MOU process with the GOL, the grantee was able to accomplish some useful preliminary grant activities. Post recommends the continuation of funding and monitoring six months after the grantee begins project implementation, which is tentatively scheduled for September and is contingent on the signing of the MOU. Given World Vision's strong record in Laos, post expects a solid program once implementation begins.

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